

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As regards some of these individuals made possible only by the improvement of the modern corporation. Corporations are necessary instruments of modern business. They have been permitted to become a menace largely because the governmental representatives of the people have worked slowly in providing for adequate control over them.

Real damage has been done by the manifold and conflicting interpretations of the interstate commerce law. Control over the great corporations doing interstate business can be effective only if it is vested with full power in an administrative department, a branch of the federal executive, carrying out federal law. It can never be effective if a divided responsibility is left in both the states and the nation. It can never be effective if left in the hands of the courts to be decided by lawsuits.

The courts hold a place of peculiar and deserved sanctity under our form of government. Respect for the law is essential to the permanence of our institutions, and respect for the law is largely conditioned upon respect for the courts. But we must face the fact that there are wise and unwise judges, just as there are wise and unwise executives and legislators. When a president or governor behaves improperly or unwisely the remedy is easy, for his term is short. The same is true with the legislator, although not to the same degree. With a judge who, being human, is also likely to err, but whose tenure is for life, there is no similar way of holding him responsible. Under ordinary conditions the only forms of pressure to which he is in any way amenable are public opinion and the action of his fellow judges. It is the last which is most immediately effective and to which we should look for the reform of abuses.

Forests.
If there is any one duty which more than another we owe it to our children and our children's children to perform, it is to save the forests of this country, for they constitute the most and most important element in the conservation of the natural resources of the country.

Shortsighted persons, or persons blinded to the future by desire to make money in every way out of the present, sometimes speak as if no great damage would be done by the reckless destruction of our forests. It is difficult to have patience with the arguments of these persons. Thanks to our own recklessness in the use of our splendid forests, we have already passed the verge of a timber famine in this country, and no measures that we now take can, at least for many years, undo the mischief that has already been done. But we can prevent further mischief being done, and it could be in the highest degree reprehensible to let any consideration of temporary convenience or temporary interference with such action, especially as regards the national forests, which the nation can now at this very moment control.

The president here cites in support of his contentions the great destruction wrought in China by the denudation of the forest areas.

What has thus happened in northern China, what has happened in central Asia, in Palestine, in north Africa, in parts of the Mediterranean countries in Europe, will surely happen in our country if we do not exercise that forethought which should be one of the chief marks of any people calling itself civilized. Nothing should be permitted to stand in the way of the preservation of the forests, and it is criminal to permit individuals to purchase a little gain for themselves through the destruction of forests when this destruction is fatal to the well-being of the whole country in the future.

Inland Waterways.
Action should be begun forthwith, during the present session of congress, for the improvement of our inland waterways—action which will result in giving us not only navigable but navigated rivers. We have spent hundreds of millions of dollars upon these waterways, yet the traffic on nearly all of them is steadily declining. This condition is the direct result of the absence of any comprehensive and far-reaching plan of waterway improvement. Obviously we cannot continue thus to expend the revenues of the government without result. It is poor business to spend money for inland navigation unless we get it.

Such shortsighted, vacillating and feeble methods are accompanied by decreasing water borne commerce and increasing traffic congestion on land, increasing floods and by the waste of public money. The remedy lies in abandoning the methods which have signally failed and adopting new ones in keeping with the needs and demands of our people.

In a report on a measure introduced in the first session of the present congress the secretary of war said, "The chief defect in the methods hitherto pursued lies in the absence of executive authority for originating comprehensive plans covering the country or several divisions thereof." In this I heartily concur.
Until the work of river improvement is undertaken in a modern way it cannot have results that will meet the needs of this modern nation. These needs should be met without further delay. The plan which combines the best and quickest results of a permanent commission authorized to co-ordinate the work of all government departments relating to waterways and to frame and supervise the execution of a comprehensive plan. The time for playing with our waterways is past. The country demands results.

National Parks.

I urge that all our national parks adjacent to national forests be placed completely under the control of the forest service of the agricultural department, instead of leaving them, as they are now, under the interior department and policed by the army.

Pure Food.
The pure food legislation has already worked a benefit difficult to overestimate.

Secret Service.
Last year an amendment was incorporated in the measure providing for the secret service which provided that there should be no detail from the secret service and no transfer therefrom. It is not too much to say that this amendment has been of benefit only, and could be of benefit only, to the criminal classes. The amendment in question was of benefit to no one excepting to criminals, and it seriously hampers the government in the detection of crime and the securing of justice. It prevents the promotion of employees in the secret service, and this further discourages good effort. In its present form the restriction operates only to the advantage of the criminal, of the wrongdoer.

The chief argument in favor of the provision was that the congressmen did not themselves wish to be investigated by secret service men. Very little of such investigation has been done in the past, but it is true that the work of the secret service agents was partly responsible for the indictment and conviction of a senator and a congressman for land frauds in Oregon. I do not believe that it is in the public interest

to protect criminals in any branch of the public service, and exactly as we have again and again during the past seven years prosecuted and convicted such criminals who were in the executive branch of the government so in my belief we should be given ample means to prosecute them if found in the legislative branch. But if this is not considered desirable a special exception could be made in the law prohibiting the use of the secret service force in investigating members of the congress. It would be far better to do this than to do what actually was done and strive to prevent or at least to hamper effective action against criminals by the executive branch of the government.

Postal Savings Banks.
I again renew my recommendation for postal savings banks, for depositing savings with the security of the government behind them. The object is to encourage thrift and economy in the wage earner and person of moderate means. It is believed that in the aggregate vast sums of money would be brought into circulation through the instrumentality of the postal savings banks. Postal savings banks are now in operation in practically all the great civilized countries with the exception of the United States.

Parcel Post.
In my last annual message I recommended the postmaster general's recommendation for an extension of the parcel post on the rural routes. The establishment of a local parcel post on rural routes would be to the mutual benefit of the farmer and the country storekeeper, and it is desirable that the routes, serving more than 15,000,000 people, should be utilized to the fullest practicable extent.

Education.
The share that the national government should take in the broad work of education has not received the attention and the care it rightly deserves. I earnestly recommend that this unfortunate state of affairs as regards the national educational office be remedied by adequate appropriations.

Census.
I strongly urge that the request of the director of the census in connection with the decennial work so soon to be begun be complied with and that the appointments to the census force be placed under the civil service law, waiving the geographical requirements as requested by the director of the census. The supervisors and enumerators should not be appointed under the civil service law for the reasons given by the director.

Public Health.
The dangers to public health from food adulteration and from many other sources, such as the menace to the physical, mental and moral development of children from child labor, should be met and overcome. This nation cannot afford to lag behind in the worldwide battle now being waged by all civilized people with the microscopic foes of mankind. The first legislative step to be taken is that for the concentration of the proper bureaus into one of the existing departments.

Statehood.
I advocate the immediate admission of New Mexico and Arizona as states. This should be done at the present session of the congress. The people of the two territories have made it evident by their votes that they will not come in as one state. The only alternative is to admit them as two, and I trust that this will be done without delay.

Foreign Affairs.
This nation's foreign policy is based on the theory that right must be done between nations precisely as between individuals, and in our actions for the last ten years we have in this matter proved our faith by our deeds. We have behaved and are behaving toward other nations as in private life an honorable man would behave toward his fellows.

Latin American Republics.
The commercial and material progress of the twenty Latin American republics is worthy of the careful attention of the congress. No other section of the world has shown a greater pro-

portionate trade during the last ten years, and no other has more eagerly placed on the interest of the United States.

Panama Canal.
The work on the Panama canal is being done with a speed, efficiency and devotion to duty which make it a model for all work of the kind. No such magnitude has ever before been undertaken by any nation, and no work of the kind has ever been better performed. The men on the isthmus, Colonel Goethals and his fellow engineers through the entire list of employees who are faithfully doing their duty, have won their right to the unending respect and gratitude of the American people.

Ocean Mail Lines.
I again recommend the extension of the ocean mail act of 1891 so that satisfactory American ocean mail lines to South America, Asia, the Philippines and Australasia may be established. The creation of such steamship lines should be the natural corollary of the voyage of the battle fleet. It should precede the opening of the Panama canal.

The Philippines.
Real progress toward self government is being made in the Philippine Islands. The gathering of a Philippine legislative body and Philippine assembly marks a process absolutely new in Asia, not only as regards Asiatic colonies of European powers, but as regards Asiatic possessions of other Asiatic powers, and indeed, always excepting the striking and wonderful example afforded by the great empire of Japan, it opens an entirely new departure when compared with anything which has happened among Asiatic powers which are their own masters. We have given the Filipinos constitutional government, a government based upon justice, and we have shown that we have governed them for their good and not for our aggrandizement.

At the present time, as during the past ten years, the inexorable logic of facts shows that this government must be supplied by us and not by them. We must be wise and generous. We must help the Filipinos to master the difficult art of self control, which is simply another name for self government. But we cannot give them self government save in the sense of governing them so that gradually they may, if they are able, learn to govern themselves. No one can prophesy the exact date when it will be wise to consider independence as a fixed and definite policy.

Porto Rico.
I again recommend that American citizenship be conferred upon the people of Porto Rico.

Cuba.
In Cuba our occupancy will cease in about two months' time. The Cubans have in orderly manner elected their own governmental authorities, and the island will be turned over to them. Our occupation on this occasion has lasted a little over two years, and Cuba has thriven and prospered under it. Our earnest hope and one desire is that the people of the island shall now govern themselves with justice, so that peace and order may be secure.

The Fleet's Reception.
I take this opportunity publicly to state my appreciation of the way in which in Japan, in Australia, in New Zealand and in all the states of South America the battle fleet has been received on its practice voyage around the world. The American government cannot too strongly express its appreciation of the abounding and generous hospitality shown our ships in every port they visited.

The Army.
As regards the army, I call attention to the fact that, while our junior officers and enlisted men stand very high, the present system of promotion by seniority results in bringing into the higher grades many men of mediocre capacity who have but a short time to serve. No man should regard it as his vested right to rise to the highest rank in the army any more than in any other profession.

The scope of retiring boards should be extended so that they could consider general unfitness to command for any cause in order to secure a far more rigid enforcement than at present in the elimination of officers for mental, physical or temperamental disabilities. But this plan is recommended only if the congress does not see fit to provide what in my judgment is far better—that is, for selection in promotion and for elimination for age.

Now that the organized militia, the national guard, has been incorporated with the army as a part of the national forces it behooves the government to do every reasonable thing in its power to perfect its efficiency.

A bill is now pending before the congress creating a number of extra officers in the army, which, if passed, as it ought to be, will enable more officers to be trained as instructors of national guard and assigned to that duty.

There should be legislation to provide a complete plan for organizing the great body of volunteers behind the regular army and national guard when war has come. While teams representing the United States won the rifle and revolver championships of the world against all comers in England this year, it is unfortunately true that the great body of our citizens shoot less and less as time goes on.

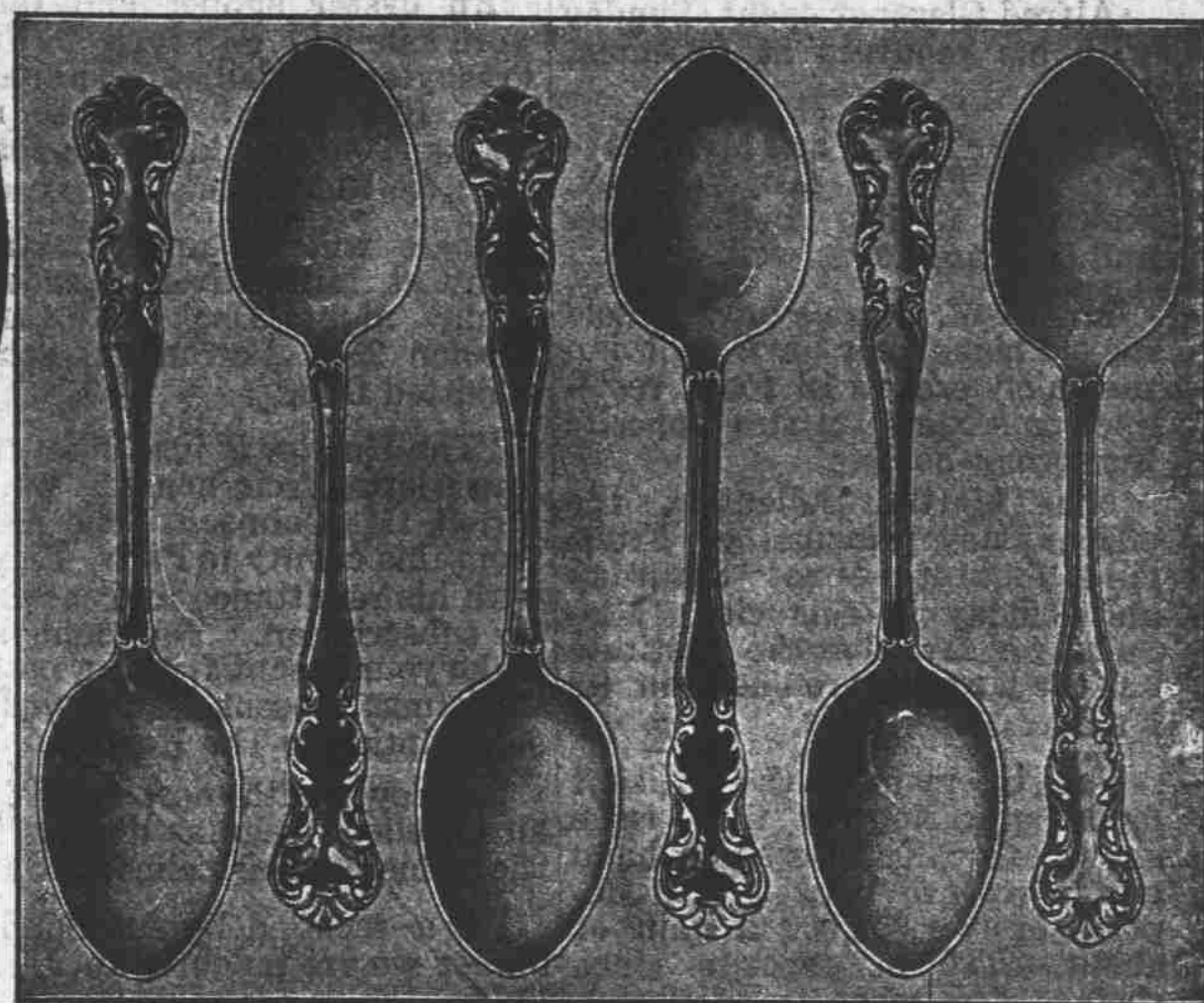
To meet this we should encourage rifle practice among schoolboys and indeed among all classes, as well as in the military services, by every means in our power.

The Navy.

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I approve the recommendations of the general board for the increase of the navy, calling especial attention to the need of additional destroyers and colliers and, above all, of the four battleships. It is desirable to complete as soon as possible a squadron of eight battleships of the best existing type. The North Dakota, Delaware, Florida and Utah will form the first division of this squadron.

I most earnestly recommend that the general board be by law turned into a general staff. The navy is literally no excuse whatever for continuing the present bureau organization of the navy. The navy should be treated as a purely military organization, and everything should be subordinated to the one object of securing military efficiency. A system of promotion by merit, either by selection or by exclusion or by both processes, should be introduced.

Nothing better for the navy from every standpoint has ever occurred than the cruise of the battle fleet around the world. The improvement of the ships in every way has been extraordinary, and they have gained far more experience in battle tactics than they would have gained if they had stayed in the Atlantic waters. I do not believe that there is any other service in the world in which the average of character and efficiency in the enlisted men is as high as is now the case in our own. I believe that the same statement can be made as to our officers, taken as a whole, but there must be a reservation made in regard to those in the highest ranks and in regard to those who have just entered the service, because we do not now get full benefit from our excellent naval school at Annapolis.

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